DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 960 EA 022 512

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TITLE Structure and Organization of Administrative Internships: Components of a Successful Program.
PUB DATE Aug 90
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (Los Angeles, CA, August 1990). Light print may not reproduce well.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Administration; Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; *Internship Programs; Management Development; Practicums; Professional Education; Program Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Components of a successful internship program are described in this report, with a focus on internships in middle management. Included are descriptions of program characteristics, pre-internship experiences, pre-internship options, knowledge prerequisites, seminars, funding and district cooperation, student and site matching, placement options, the relationship between internship and job placement success, and an assessment of interns and followup studies. A preliminary conclusion, pending further data analysis, is that the program is successful. Improvements underway include the addition of an orientation seminar and courses in school law and finance, revision of followup questionnaires and the intern handbook, and placement of interns into paid positions. The responsibility for program success is viewed as a product of cooperation among the university, student, site supervisor, and district/agency. (10 references) (LMI)

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STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIPS:

COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

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Paper presented at the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration Annual Conference
Los Angeles, CA
August 1990

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STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIPS:

COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Introduction

Internships is a term being used to describe an increasingly diverse set of activities in the field of Educational Administration. Despite their diversity, most instances of administrative internship experiences have at their core the idea that they are out of the university classroom experiences, with most being sponsored by a university program and based in an educational setting. In addition, an administrative internship generally involves a university faculty member who may serves as a mentor or guide for the educational experiences, and a site-based supervisor who oversees the daily activities of the intern. The student is responsible for a work assignment within the educational setting, and answers to both the university and the site based supervisor for specific tasks and learning endeavors. Although this is a somewhat broad definition of an administrative internship, such a definition is necessary to accommodate the breadth of internship experiences found in the field, and necessary to develop a cadre of administrators with varying capabilities and roles.

Administrative internships are a vital and required part of the administrative preparation program at the University of Texas at Austin. An internship program has been in place for over 25 years at UT, evolving through the years to its present state. Internships are required for students seeking state certification in the areas of mid-management (which covers assistant principal through assistant superintendent), supervisor, and superintendency. Although students are required to participate in several activities throughout their studies which afford them opportunities to interact with and be part of a school district or agency, an intense and full-time experience is also required. For this, students are placed out of their home district into another setting which affords them the maximum opportunity to experience decision making styles, policies, boards, and

environments in which to learn. The internships are funded by the receiving district, and thus the student becomes a member of the administrative team in the district for a period of time. Internship sites are sought and developed throughout the year. Administrative interns are matched with the needs and requests of the receiving district, as well as their own personnel aspirations and needs as closely as possible. They are placed into numerous school districts and educational agencies throughout the state of Texas. Two recent follow-up studies have been done to determine areas of perceived strength and weakness of the internship program.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a current internship program. It does not have as its basis theoretical constructs, a review of the literature, or a report on major research in the area of internships. This paper will focus on internships in the areas of mid-management (assistant principal through assistant superintendent) and supervision. (Handouts address superintendency as well).

The objectives of this paper are to describe:

1. the characteristics of the internship program;
2. Pre-internship experiences;
3. the types of internships options;
4. the knowledge base required prior to an internship;
5. the seminars that accompany the internship experience;
6. how funding and district cooperation is developed;
7. the internship and placement options;
8. how students and sites are matched;
9. the relationship between the internship and job placement success;
10. assessment of interns and follow-up studies.

Administrator Preparation Programs and Internships

School administration is an applied field. The preparation of school administrators at all levels must include an opportunity for students studying the field of administration to practice the craft and art of administration in environments outside of the university classroom. This includes providing opportunities for aspiring administration to apply their knowledge in a structured environment, to practice skills and to synthesize information. Some administration preparation programs provide no opportunities for students to practice their skills and knowledge in a practical environment/internship or field residency experience. Those that do seldom incorporate such experiences with the regular coursework of the department. Many internships are arranged in the student's home school district and often consist of an hour or two a day on top of or squeezed into the student's regular teaching load. Given the tremendous and growing responsibilities of school administrators in our nation's schools today and that predicted for the future, internships are an increasingly vital and necessary part of a preparation program.

The University Council for Educational Administration, (endorsed by the Higher Education Committee of the American Association of School Administrators), in their annual meeting in 1989 adopted the following Statement of Purpose of Educational Administration preparation:

*Professional preparation programs should be systematic, sequential, and linked to the knowledge base and best practices of the field.

*Professional preparation programs should include concentrated periods of full-time study and supervised clinical practice.

*Long term formal relationships should be established between university, professional preparation programs, school districts and other appropriate agencies to create partnership sites for clinical study, field residency and applied research.

*Professional preparation programs should develop and maintain systematic efforts to assist all students in professional placement and career advancement.

The purpose of educational administration preparation programs is to develop school leaders who actively shape an organizational culture that promotes individual creativity and performance. Graduates of preparation programs should demonstrate knowledge, critical skills, and sensitivity to moral issues and equity in a pluralistic context. In addition, graduates should be capable of managing increasingly complex social and education tasks. If one accepts these statements, then these must become the objectives that each preparation program strives to achieve.

Learning through field experience thus becomes a major focus of the administration preparation program. If these are the standards that are expected of an administrator preparation program, what is the knowledge base upon which these experiences are to be based? What is competence in school administration? Some suggest that competence *is* knowledge and transferable skills upon which to draw to make decisions and govern actions. A paper presented at the 1989 UCEA conference cites Anderson (1989) as suggesting domains of professional knowledge which can be drawn upon as required by the situation confronting the administrator. These knowledge domains include:

*Local knowledge: this includes information specific to a setting, a particular community and the organization being worked in. It is the insider's knowledge or perspective.

*Cultural knowledge: this is the knowledge base that consists of the symbols, rites, stories, rituals, and the impact of each of these upon the organization. This knowledge can determine whether the administrator will be effective or ineffective in the organization as leader.

*Personal knowledge: messages sent and received, the decisions made, and the knowledge acquired are all impacted by abilities, preferences, styles, and personal experiences. The person-environment fit (French and Caplan, 1970) is a

critical component to consider as part of the knowledge base.

*Moral/Ethical knowledge: moral dilemmas often occur in the course of decision making for an administrator. These situations require the conscience of the administrator to examine their own ethics, both universal and individual in nature.

*Political knowledge: awareness of the power and the hierarchial structures, and knowledge of the networks of influence within the structure of the larger community and the educational setting are important for success within the structure.

*Craft knowledge: the repertoire of professional experiences that the administrator brings to draw upon are important variables for success. This must go beyond technical skills into the realm of conceptual, human relations and reflective practices.

*Critical knowledge: this involves the ability to view the larger social system within which education is embedded and an understanding of the structures that create and overlay within educational institutions.

*Research knowledge: practitioners are influenced by research either in a direct or indirect fashion, depending upon the use and diffusion of the data. Persons involved in organizational change are influence by the nature of the dissemination of this research data.

*Theoretical knowledge: often perceived as the most important knowledge and/or the only knowledge preparation programs should be concerned with, theories are the patterns followed for development of the individual's beliefs, attitudes, and values about educational institutions and environments within which administrators function.

Each of these encompasses and is part of what is often referred to as the three basic competency areas necessary for administrators: conceptual, technical, and human relation skills.

Where and how, then, can these experience base be provided? A strong internship program can have all of these components, providing the necessary elements to develop this knowledge base. The knowledge base is comprised of numerous entities developed through structured university coursework and internship experience working in tandem.

Characteristics of the University of Texas Internship Program

To establish a viable internship program, there are numerous characteristics that lend strength and stability to the concept. These are constants without which the program would not have the high rate of success that it does. Some of the characteristics found in the UT program are:

1. a sequenced written plan of coursework and timelines prepared and filed for each student;

2. at least 27 hours of coursework completed prior to being eligible for an internship placement. It is preferable that the student complete 42 or more hours prior to placement (this is a minimum 56 hour program);

3. a separate internship required in each area in which they are seeking certification (this means three internships for some students);

4. internship experiences are not done within the district in which the student is employed;

5. placement in a students' own district will be considered only if they are being assigned to a new building or position that they have not previously held, with new responsibilities and supervisors, or placement out of the district will cause undue hardship on the intern and/or his or her family. All intern positions in the students' own district must be negotiated by and with the university;

6. application for internships made at least the May prior to the year in which they seek placement (samples in Appendix);

7. students may seek their own internship positions only with the approval of the university, and may accept only after the district and the university have negotiated the parameters of the position;

8. internships are full-time;

9. a minimum internship is one semester;

10. internships are paid, and the student becomes an employee of the school district for that period of time;

11. six semester hours of seminars that accompany the internship experience;

12. daily journals of activities are kept by the students, as well as weekly logs of experiences;

13. an opportunity to participate in a diversity of competency areas and settings related to administrative experiences.

By maintaining this set of standards, the University is able to provide quality interns for school districts throughout the state of Texas, while assuring that interns are receiving the best possible experiences for professional preparation and growth.

Pre-Internship Experiences

Prior to the full-time internship experience, students are provided with several opportunities to work in school districts and educational agencies to expose them to the administrative world and help prepare them for the internship experiences.

The program and experiences leading up to the full-time internship are both campus and field based. The University program is a graduate degree program, and not primarily a certification program. Students must be registered for a degree program within the department, or the college, to pursue certification. In addition, students are admitted only after they meet University graduate requirements and successfully complete an assessment center. Students who do not successfully complete the

assessment center are not admitted to the department. Students are admitted to the department two times a year, summer (June) and winter (January) semesters. The term currently used for this practice is "cohorts".

The State requires a minimum of 45 semester hours for each certificate. The UT program as approved by the Texas Education Agency combines both certification programs into a program of approximately 54-60 hours, depending upon what academic and experiential background the student brings with them. As the program is designed, it takes most students two years (including full-time for 3 summers) to complete the academic and internship work required for mid-management (assistant principal through assistant superintendent) and supervision certification, again depending on the academic hours they bring with them. Students who attend full time can usually complete all work in 4 or 5 semesters. The basic program is structured as follows:

*The first summer student attend full-time, taking 6 hours in Foundations of Educational Administration, and 3 hours in School Community Relations. Daily logs of activities and experiences are kept by each student. As part of the School Community Relations course, students work with an individual school district, which has negotiated an agreement with the professors in charge of the program, to conduct a Community Survey. Students develop specific questions around topics the school board provides, validate, conduct, write, and present a community survey to the school board in an open meeting. The survey is developed in the classroom setting by the students with the guidance of the professors. Students work with the superintendent and other central office administrators in the development of the questionnaire, the survey sampling and mapping procedures, and other detail in planning. They field test the survey prior to beginning the survey to assure questions are not leading or biased. The means of presenting the survey, all of the statistical data manipulation, the charts, graphs, etc., must be set up prior to leaving for the survey site. In addition, they must set up all logistics for the survey, including zeroxing, printing, typing, tallying, editing, surveying teams, surveying times, pert charts, travel, transportation, and lodging arrangements, et al, needed while in the district. All of this must be done on a budget, of course. The survey itself, including the door to door interviews of approximately 400 residents, is conducted, analyzed, written and presented to the board in a 3-4 day time period. This experience provides the students with an intense field experience to acquaint them with administration. The experience encompasses conceptual, technical, and human relation skills in a variety of areas. It is a "rit-of-passage" into the realities of school administration.

During that same summer session, students are introduced to a number of departments, personnel, and a range of ideas within the state education agency. They spend short periods of time at the agency, attending State Board meetings, talking to the commissioner and assistant commissioners, and learning about the role of the state department in the life of a site-based administrator, as well as the responsibilities of the administrator to the state department. In addition, students are involved in attending and working at 2-3 statewide administrators conferences. This brings home to them the realities of the politics of education in a rapid manner. Students attend the statewide Elementary Principals and Supervisors conference, the Secondary Principals conference, the Community Schools conference (small and rural schools), and they have the option of attending the Women Executives conference. In July, approximately 800 superintendents and other central office personnel meet for the annual Superintendent's Workshops. Students are involved in the registering, introducing of speakers, attending sessions, evaluating sessions, and other activities.

Each of these activities throughout the summer provide a broadening of the knowledge base of administration, and exposure to the breadth of the field, as well as the options available within the field of administration. After each experience, the students debrief, share ideas and materials, ask questions, and develop their framework of reference for administration. It is important to note that all of these activities, except the community survey, are done in addition to the 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. class hours. Students' attendance at the conferences only takes 3-4 days out of the classroom throughout the entire summer. Most conference activities are held on weekends. Although these experiences are not "structured" in the sense of the actual internship, each contributes significantly to a students' understanding of and exposure to administration as a whole.

*During the fall semester, students are provided several opportunities to develop their core knowledge of administration both in and outside of the classroom. All students are required to take a 6 hour companion/follow-up course from the summer experience. This class, called the Advanced Block, is an intense academic coursework consisting of reading, writing and practical experiences. During this time, some of the activities students are asked to do include:

-attending a state board meeting and several different local board meetings and writing on the similarities and differences in numerous areas;

-shadow a principal for at least 3 full working days and report on the findings, including the literature related to the area. This experience must be at a different level than the one the student is currently working at or has taught at;

-become part of an Accreditation Team visit with the Texas Education Agency and review a school district. This cannot be done in the home district;

-read, write a report on, and discuss 6-8 leading paperback books in the current areas of discussion;

-interview central office personnel in specific assigned areas;

-develop in-service training packets and provide the training for the school related to specific areas of need as identified by the principal on the students' campus;

-develop, with the assistance of the principal, a site based budget;

-attend district principal meetings;

-develop, with the assistance of the principal, campus plans;

-assist the principal in a major project (ie: drug program, child find, teacher evaluation, crisis planning, etc.) and report it to the class;

-accompany TEA on a monitoring and compliance review, if possible;

-become a session facilitator or introduce speakers at the statewide administrators and school board conference, attend sessions and report on the dynamics of the politics and content of the sessions.

As can be seen, all of these experiences are intended to provide the student with practical and/or field based experiences, while accompanied by academic coursework and feedback in a classroom setting. These activities are part of the coursework, which also includes guest speakers, case studies, interviewing prospective teachers, etc.

Other options students have for field based experiences within the program include a course in Community and Regional Planning, where they work with a city or municipal government to map and plan future building sites; Finance, where they attend budget hearings and legislative sessions; In-service Design, where students design and present inservice training; Program Evaluation, where students develop instruments and evaluate programs on their campus or in their district; School Law, where students attend hearings, see videos on dismissals, talk to lawyers and judges, policemen, actually prepare the documentation for a mock hearing; and a host of other experiences designed to combine theory into practice throughout their program.

Internship Options

So after all of this, where does the internship fit into the learning experience? Most students begin their internship during their last year of required coursework. There are, of course, variations on this due to individual accommodations and circumstances. The concrete experiences and background that has been provided with coursework and the experiences and observations as described above are all centered on developing a knowledgeable administrator who has both the theory and the ability to put that theory into practice on the job. The internship offers students another opportunity to "reflect" on the information and knowledge they have gained throughout their coursework and accompanying experiences, to synthesize and abstract conceptualizations, to test ideas and concepts in new situations, and have a forum for discussion.

Prior to beginning the internship, each student is asked to develop a profile of their perceived strengths and weaknesses. This profile, along with other data including that gather during the assessment center, is discussed with the student. Students then have a plan with which they can focus their personal development activities during the internship experience. Using the packets of activities that have been developed to be used during the internship experience, students can dedicate time and effort on self-development in a specific area while completing the site based requirements of the activities.

Internship options are developed with school districts when students have submitted their applications and it is known what experiences they have, what areas of the state they are able to serve in, and how many placements are needed. There are several different options available for fulfilling the

internship experience, depending again on the individuals' experiences, background and long term professional goals. Some of the desirable options of an internship are:

*students seeking dual certification (mid-management and supervision) have the opportunity to work with more than one administrator

*students have the opportunity to experience several different school environments

*students have the opportunity to work in the central office

*students are not relegated to only one task or assignment

*students should experience a variety of events that occur within a district

*students should have experience across a breadth of areas they may be involved in or be responsible for

With this in mind, and in order to be able to accommodate the students' and districts' needs, students may choose among the following options, or have another option approved:

*a full-year internship--this is usually split between a position as an assistant principal and an assistant to a director in the central office; the position pays 18,000+ depending upon the district. At times, students will work in one position for the full year, and opt to do another internship in the fall or spring of the next year in the other area of certification while completing coursework for a doctorate or a dissertation. These positions are becoming very common for our students, with more districts asking for full-time interns each year.

*fall internship placement--although districts in the past did not favor these placements, recently more and more districts are accepting fall only placements. Students are again placed into positions of assistant principals, assistants to directors in central offices, or put in charge of specific programs (ie: inservice education, personnel, etc); the position pays 10,000-18,000.

*spring internship placement--this is still the most common placement made. Students usually work at the building site for most of this placement, and work with the central office for a quarter of the time on the supervision aspects; these positions pay 10,000-18,000 also.

*full-year internship split between two different setting--a student may have the opportunity to work with a superintendent or director of curriculum for one-half year in one district, and then go to another district for the rest of the year and work as a principal or an assistant principal. The pay for these positions varies by district, but generally is between 18,000-24,000.

*students who do not wish to be principals may have the opportunity to work at a Regional Service Center, and work with principals in another capacity. The pay for these positions is also between 18,000 and 22,000+.

At the present time, much of the activity related to the arena of supervision in focused on the building site administrator. As a result, it is easier to provide the supervision components of the internship through the site based internship than to try to accommodate the principalship components of the internship through a central office placement. Again, the internship is arranged for the individual student, so a student with a great deal of experience in the area of supervision may not spend much time at all on the supervision components of the internship in this area of his/her professional development. All administrators in Texas are required to take a minimum of 36 hours of Instructional Leadership Training prior to being eligible for other state mandated training.

Other options for placement are also available throughout the state. For instance the Texas Association of School Administrators, the Texas Education Agency, and the Southwest Development Lab become options for placement for one, two, or three semester, depending upon the career goals and experience of the student.

The Core Academic Knowledge Base

As mentioned in previous section, students are required to take a minimum of 27 core hours prior to being eligible for an internship. It is preferable that the student be in the last semesters of their required coursework so that they have a much broader background of information, concepts, and

experiences from which to develop skills in problem solving and decision making. The core courses consist of the following:

*6 hour summer Foundations of Educational Administration

*3 hour summer School Community Relations

*6 hour fall Advanced Block

*3 hour fall Instructional Supervision

*3 hours of Organizational Theory

*3-6 hours in Curriculum and Instruction

*3-6 hours in Special Education

These courses constitute the core of the program. They are required of all students prior to the internship, and are the minimum that may be taken for placement. Students are encouraged, however, to complete as many hours as possible before the internship experience. The other hours required include:

*3-6 hours in Inservice Design and/or Program Evaluation

*3-6 hours in Personnel Management and/or Personnel Evaluation

*3 hours of Multicultural, Bilingual Education or Societal Factors

*9-12 hours of addition approved coursework which may be chosen from a variety of courses (eg. School Law, Sociology, Ed. Psych., Management, Finance, Federal/State Relations, Facilities, Politics of Education, Computer Applications for Administrators, and others as approved

Each of these courses has been developed around the Leadership Domains and Task Areas (outline found in the Appendix). In addition, the course content has been cross-referenced with the state competency exams objectives to assure that content on the exam is covered in the coursework as well. (A sample of these objectives is found in the Appendix). Successful completion if the state exams is required of all administrators to be eligible for certification.

Seminar Courses That Accompany The Internship

During the internship, students must enroll in two seminar courses that accompany the internship experience. These courses have been developed to enhance the experience by bringing the coursework and the field experiences together in a forum for sharing insights, understanding and developing problem solving and decision making skills, concepts that are learned or formulated during the internship activities, and practicing collaborative problem solving among the interns/participants. One seminar is a Practicum in Instructional Supervision, and the other focuses on the Administration of the Individual School (referred to as the Principalship course at many universities). Each of these seminars requires the students to complete a series of activities at their field based site, using data from their school or district as the basis of their reports for the seminar (examples of these packets are available at the session).

Interns are required to keep daily journals or diaries of their experiences, tasks, responsibilities, feedback, feelings, problem solving processes, persons they have interacted with, and the results of the problem solving efforts or tasks. They are asked to develop case studies of at least one incident per week. In addition, each student sends to his or her university supervisor on a weekly basis, a log of recorded experiences. The university supervisor then reviews and analyzes these logs, comments on them, makes suggestions about problem solving techniques or suggests other alternatives to the decision making approach taken in handling situations that occurred, and returns the logs to the student. At some point during each of the seminars, students are asked to analyze the contents of their journals and logs, look at trends in their activities, approaches, philosophies, interpersonal relationships, concepts learned, shortcomings, areas in which more experience is needed, etc. and share with the students and professor their findings and how they would do things differently now than they did at the time. (This is currently referred to as reflective practices in the literature).

Funding and District Cooperation

Students in the internship program are supported by the districts. Separate negotiations are done with each district. Throughout the year, faculty members take every opportunity to talk about the program, meet informally with district personnel, and promote the benefits of having an intern in the district. At times, superintendents request that a faculty member write a letter or meet directly with the board to discuss the position and the benefits of the investment for the district. Follow-up calls and visits are done by the

internship coordinator. Throughout the year, faculty promote the program and generate names of new and potential districts that may wish to participate. There are a number of districts that provide 2-3 positions each year for interns. The list of districts that desire interns is growing each year as they realize the benefits of having interns, and better cooperative relations with the University. The key to securing paid internships is assuring the districts that the interns are qualified, and listing the benefits of having the intern to the district.

Developing cooperative relations with the schools is a vital component of the internship program. The concept of a team working with each intern to plan and provide experiences is important for all persons involved. Each university supervisor is required to meet with the designated district intern supervisor or administrator in charge of interns within the first 2 weeks of the internship placement. During this meeting, at which the intern is present, plans for activities for the intern are developed, and understanding of the number of hours expected, the responsibilities, the projects to be undertaken and other details are discussed. This team approach to understanding the roles and responsibilities of each person involved with the intern is an important element to the program. Without this understanding, neither the intern or the district is sure of their position or responsibilities, and the intern ultimately looses valuable time and experiences without this direction. Although district supervisors receive no remuneration for their participation, stronger ties and cooperative efforts are one of the mutual results of the internship placement experience. It also affords administrators an opportunity to gleen information from the interns about the latest trends, readings, research, etc. that they may not have had the opportunity in their busy schedules to learn about. Administrators from the districts and intern supervisors are often asked to serve on committees or task forces, participate in conferences, assist with the assessment center, and speak to classes to share practical knowledge about administration. All of these activities have had beneficial results for both the university and the school districts. These on-going communication efforts are vital for the success of cooperative relationships and continuance of support for the internship program.

Matching students and sites

Once the students who desire internships are known, and most of the site secured, the next decision is: Who goes where?

To determine placements, the department uses a committee of professors who are involved with this aspect of the department program to evaluate

each of the students, talk about their strengths and areas of needed development, background and experiences, geographical location desires, and other aspects. The internship coordinator then describes each of the internship positions available, and the team tries to match the needs of the intern to those of the districts. If there does not appear to be an appropriate position available, the coordinator may approach the district to consider modifying their requirements, may try another district to secure a placement, or may approach the student regarding needed modifications in their plans or desired placement. As a rule, one of these approaches will develop into a viable solution for all parties. The process of placing students into the appropriate positions is taken very seriously, as it is critical to assure the outcome be successful for the survival of the program, and the reputation of the University.

Relationship Between the Internship and Job Placement Success

Not surprisingly, students are often offered employment in the districts in which they do their internship experience. The internship experience provides districts with the opportunity to examine at close range the knowledge base, philosophies, and personal attributes of the prospective administrator. Students are often approached with offers for permanent employment early in the internship experience. Frequently districts request to employ students that have been through the Foundations of Administration program. Not employing the intern does not indicate dissatisfaction with the student or their performance. There is more than one small district that has said that if they employ the interns, then there would no longer be positions open into which interns could be placed. Other districts look forward each year to renewing the opportunity to have the benefit of the new ideas, information, and perspectives that an intern brings. If they hire each intern, the district would loose the opportunity to learn from the new experience of a new person. The placement rate of students, either in the district of the internship or otherwise, is high. In the last four years, every student has been employed as an administrator prior to the beginning of the following school year. In one local district, four of the last six administrators offered employment this last summer were graduates of this program, and all four had completed their internships in the same district. The program director works with each student who is seeking employment to develop a resume and portfolio for prospective employers to review. Portfolios consist of the following components:

*professional vita

*records of undergraduate and graduate coursework

*list of 3 professional referents

*copy of their last two years of teacher or administrative evaluations

*copy of any meritorious recognition they have received

*copy of any articles written, curriculum developed, or like samples of their work

*self-profile of their goals, aspirations, accomplishments, skills, abilities, strengths and areas needing improvement

*other items or documents to support their position

Assessment of interns and follow-up studies

As mentioned in a previous section, students are asked to keep a daily journal of activities as well as a weekly log that is turned in to the university supervisor. At least once during the course of the internship and at the end of the experience, students are asked to do a self-analysis of the contents of their journals and logs. Students are asked to take a critical look at the patterns that emerge in their documentation from the beginning to the end of their experiences and perceptions, and to analyze the changes in their attitudes, decision making skills, methods of handling situations, philosophical changes, problem solving techniques, and interpersonal relations, among other areas. In addition, students are asked to analyze: the amount of time they are spending on different areas of administrative tasks and responsibilities; how their areas of strength and those needing improvement have changed and what areas still need to be attended to; their feelings; and other such areas. Each of these is intended to provide the intern with a better understanding of the process of become an administrator on a very personal basis. These areas are shared and discussed in the seminar setting where the students can receive constructive feedback, comments, and assistance from their colleagues. At the current time, an schematic for analyzing these intern journals and logs if being developed by the program director. This information should add considerable insights into the processes of a variety of areas of administrative development and intern experiences.

At the end of each semester, both students and district supervisors are asked to provide the university with additional data on both the individual

student and the program as a whole. The most recent self-report that was completed by students yielded the following information. This is not the entire report, but is meant to provide a snapshot of the information gathered from the last students completing internships in the areas of both mid-management and supervision:

*Students serving intern positions as assistant principals participated most often in the following activities (in descending order)

-disciplining of students
-conducting teacher appraisals/evaluations
-chairing special education placement meetings
-presenting inservice workshops to the faculty
-developing and implementing special projects for the principal or district
- reviewing and developing budgets
-conducting walk through observations (for teacher appraisal)
-working on Adopt a School activities/meetings/implementation
-attending program meetings and activities
-scheduling students

Some of the other activities mid-management interns participated in included:

-supervising grounds and buildings
-interviewing personnel for hiring
-placing and assigning students
-conducting meetings
-conferencing with parents
-participating in/developing public relations
-working with teachers in a variety of capacities

*Students serving intern positions in the capacity of a supervisor participated most often in the these activities (in descending order)

-reviewing textbooks for adoption
-planning and developing curriculum
-preparing and coordinating inservice
-preparing budgets
-working with teachers on curriculum/instruction issues

Other activities supervision interns reported to have participated in include:

-monitoring bilingual programs
-visiting schools with counselors
-chairing curriculum committees
-attending special education placement meetings
-developing behavior programs
-preparing grants
-selecting and ordering materials
-scheduling traveling materials
-assisting with the Science Fair
-coordinating programs for limited English speaking students

Students were asked to rank the activities/responsibilities they participated in that they thought were most helpful to their understanding of their role as an administrator and that contributed most to their overall development processes.

*The students reported that the most helpful activities or areas of responsibility were (in descending order):

-substituting for an absent administrator
-working with and observing teachers
-attending meetings

(rankings for the above three areas were tied)

-visiting other schools and administrators
-working with/conferencing with parents
-planning programs

Other areas that they ranked as helpful included:

-interaction with the state agency
-observing functions of the total district
-learning the processes of the district
-budgeting work
-learning how programs interface
-working with the assistant principal

Interns were then asked to rank the activities or responsibilities that they thought had been the least helpful the their professional development as an administrator.

*The following activities were listed, in descending order, as the least helpful:

-performing clerical-type work
-attending special education placement meetings
-supervising distribution and collection of textbooks
-serving as the "morale officer"
-developing inventories
-budgeting
-observing different principals
-conducting/participating in public relations
-writing curriculum
-attending meetings

Interns were also asked to comment on both positive and negative aspects of the administration preparation program itself. This was an open ended question. There was, ahem, only one positive comment received:

-the Advanced Block was the most helpful course in preparing for activities encountered

However, program improvement takes place when weaknesses and areas in need of modification are known. The following is an example of the comments received with regard to program improvement:

-make a course in school law required--this is a legal environment and I was lost!

-need a course on School Finance that is oriented toward the building site administrator and not just the central office personnel and superintendent--that is of little practical use to the building administrator in budgeting and planning fiscal matters on-site

The second follow-up study that is conducted asks the district level supervisor of the intern to rate the interns performance in a variety of areas. The following questions were part of the questionnaire:

*What are the areas of activities in which the intern was engaged during the internship in mid-management? (The results are reported for the area of supervision as well) In descending order, district supervisors reported:

-student services
-curriculum
-personnel
-policy and regulations
-instructional supervision
-budgeting
-predictions and projections

*What are the kinds of activities in which the intern was involved? In descending order they reported:

-planning
-organizing
-observing
-writing, composing
-reading, assimilating information
-thinking
-discussing

*What are the strengths of the intern?

-human relation skills
-conflict management
-role model
-bilingual capacity
-planning
-organizing
-task orientation
-research skills
-leadership
-problem solving

*What are some of the areas in which the intern needs further development?

-computer skills
-punctuality

-budgeting
-communication
-scheduling

This information, combined with the student journals, logs, and other data from the districts and student follow-up questionnaires provides the department with the opportunity to take a critical look at themselves, their areas of strength and those needing improvement from both the student and field practitioners perspective. Often the supervising practitioners and other district administrators are asked to assist in revising materials used in the program, to speak to the seminar groups, and provide other services to the department and students to assist in improving the program and bringing new perspectives to the department.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to provide a description of a successful internship program. The components and characteristics of the program have been described to assist those who are developing such programs. As can be gleened from this paper, a successful internship program takes many hours of dedicated work from the student, the university and the district or agency accepting the intern. Each has a considerable stake in both the process and the product. Research on the internship program through journal and log analysis will begin in the fall, and the results of the follow-up questionnaires are being tabulated for presentation to the faculty and possible publication in the fall. Although the University has developed a highly successful internship program, there is much work to be done. Improvements are underway to add a course in site based finance and facilities, most students are enrolling in at least one law course, the follow-up questionnaires are being revised with the assistance of administrators from local district, an orientation seminar is scheduled for late August for all district supervisors, students, and faculty involved in internships this year, the intern handbook is being revised, and, most importantly, all of the students have been placed into paid internship positions for the coming year.

Understanding the process of becoming an administrator, researching an appropriate knowledge base, modifying programs and other activities to assure the best possible experiences and foundation of knowledge for administrators is the responsibility of the student, the university and the site supervisor and district/agency working together as a team for the future of our schools and children.

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